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ENG 5061-001: Special Topics: Utopia and Beyond

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English 5061.001 Fall 2007 Special Topics: Utopia and Beyond
Prof. Carol Stevens
Class Meets: W 7:00-9:30 p.m. in 3159 Coleman Hall

Office: 3861 Coleman Hall
Phone and Voicemail: 581-6970
E-mail: cdstevens@eiu.edu
Office Hours: 2:30-4:30 Tues. and Thurs, Wed. 2:30-3:30 and by appointment.

Textbooks:

Butler, *Erewhon*

Gilman, *Herland*

Le Guin, *Always Coming Home* (not in TRS—I'll provide copies)

More, *Utopia*

Salzman, *An Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Fiction*

Stoppard, Tom *The Coast of Utopia* (3 plays, *Voyage*, *Shipwreck*, and *Salvage*—we may have to share copies of these)

Tepper, *The Gate to Women's Country* (again, not in TRS—I'll provide copies)

Other materials such as critical readings will certainly be added, so stay tuned.

Also, you are responsible for learning from each other, and exams, responses etc.

may include all handouts and other materials presented by any person in this class.

Course Description and Objectives:

“Utopia is about how we would live and what kind of a world we would live in if we could do just that.” (Ruth Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia* 1) From the myth of the Golden Age to More's Utopia and well beyond, literary representations of the impossibly good life abound. In this course, you will read, think about, and analyze texts central to the Utopian canon as well as some late-adds and Utopian/Dystopian branches. You'll examine some real-world Utopias, including taking a field trip to New Harmony, Indiana, the site of two Utopian communities, a Harmonist (or 'Rappite') community and an Owenite one.

Grading: Unless otherwise specified, your grading will be based upon 100 points as follows—

Mid-term Exam or equivalent 15 points

Final Exam or equivalent 15 points

Participation and group work 10 points

Reading Responses 10 points

Paper/project 50 points

Grades will use numbers instead of letters, and will not be curved. These will convert into your final grade as follows: 90-100=A, 80-89=B, 70-79 (below C, don't ask.)

Responsibilities and Policies:

1. Come to every class meeting, and keep the lines of communication open. Late work gets lowered grades. The group's size, pretty typical of graduate classes in the English Department but actually a small group, means that everyone who misses even a single class places undue burdens on all the other members of the class. So attendance is important. See below.
2. No notebook computers, cell phones, mp3 players etc. on or out in the classroom. At all, ever, except as prescribed by the Office of Disability Services. They are a distraction and impede learning for everyone, not just the person using them.
3. More than one absence will result in a deduction from your point total of 1 point for every class missed. More than four, and you will not pass the course. But there will be points added for students who contribute to discussion and write clear, articulate, and thoughtful responses to the reading.
4. Honor Policy: The ethics of academic honesty dictate that students do their own work—always. Taking someone else's words or thoughts and using them in your own writing without giving credit is plagiarism as is cheating on exams etc. As a graduate student, you should familiarize yourself thoroughly with departmental and university policy and follow it.
5. Paper Format: papers and class responses should be typed, double-spaced with one-inch margins and type no larger than 12-point, with your name, the class, the section number, and the date at the top. They should use MLA style for citations.

Responses: You'll submit a 250-500-word writing on each work you read, at the beginning of the class meeting when the reading is due. These will be commented on and returned to you. Keep them—they are your reading journal. Some questions to get you started to what extent is the work you're reading a response to the actual historical circumstances that surround it. Who is the author's audience? What does his/her relationship to that audience seem to be? Is the author being ironic? Satiric? Pleading? Joking? What specific passages engaged you or put you off? Why those in particular?

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Please Note: Any policy statement or syllabus is by its very nature a tentative document. Changes in any part, including grading, are possible during the semester, and an announcement in class will be considered sufficient notice of such change.

English 5061.001 Special Topics: Utopia and Beyond

Syllabus

Any syllabus is, by its nature, a tentative document—some dates and reading assignments may change, and there will almost certainly be additions. An announcement in class will be considered sufficient notice of such changes.

Dates given are dates by which the reading must be completed for class, though we may get to them a bit later or not finish them entirely in the time allotted. If you finish an assignment early, be sure to give yourself a refresher before we discuss it in class. There will be biographical and critical readings made available to you during the term via hard-copy and e-mail reserve. They will sometimes be required reading, to be added to this syllabus. In addition to the reading, I expect you to prepare a 250-500 word typed reader response and to hand it in at the beginning of the class meeting.

Aug. 22 Introductions, policies, exercise in individual/cooperative action

Aug. 29 More, *Utopia*, vii-127 (Preface, text of *Utopia*, supplementary readings in sources from Ovid to Amerigo Vespucci, and writings within the 16th Century Humanist circle).

Sept. 5 Cavendish, *The Blazing World* in *An Anthology of 17th Century Short Fiction*

Sept. 12 Meet in Booth Library for an introduction to Utopian Studies research materials first half of class; second half essays in More's *Utopia* text by Chambers, Hexter, Fox, and Surtz

Sept. 19 Butler, *Erewhon*, and selections in *Utopia* volume by Bellamy, Huxley, and Skinner

Sept. 26 Gilman, *Herland*

Oct.3 Le Guin, *Always Coming Home* (I'll provide copies)

Oct. 12 Mid-term exam

Oct. 17 Tepper, *The Gate to Women's Country* (again, I'll provide copies)

Oct. 24 Critical readings on feminist ecotopias, and Stoppard, *Voyage*; 1-page topic statement for research papers due.

Oct. 31 Reading on e-reserve from Isaiah Berlin, *Russian Thinkers*, and Stoppard, *Shipwreck*.

Nov. 7 Bibliography for research paper due. Stoppard, *Salvage*

Nov. 14 Final Research presentations begin today and continue to end of semester.

Nov. 21 Thanksgiving Recess

Nov. 28 Research Papers due. Final Presentations continue.

Dec. 5 Final Presentations continue. Prep for final exam.

Final Exam Wednesday December 12, 7:30-9:30 p.m.